Application No. 10/705,811

Amendment dated November 9, 2006

After Final Office Action of August 9, 2006

REMARKS

Docket No.: 20050/0200482-US0

In view of the above amendment, applicant believes the pending application is in condition

for allowance.

I. Status of the Claims

Claims 1-3, 6, 9, 10, 14 and 17 are amended without the introduction of new matter.

Claims 1-18 are pending.

The Examiner required that the claim status identifier for claim 10 be corrected. In the

previous response, the identifier should have been "currently amended." Because the Examiner

appears to have examined claim 10 as amended in the outstanding Office Action, and claim 10 is

not amended in the present response, the identifier for claim 10 reads "previously presented" in the

present response.

II. Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as anticipated by Buell (U.S. Patent No.

5,197,959). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Independent claim 1 is directed to an interlabial pad and amended to recite that "the

absorbent body [has] one or a plurality of bending elements including a slit formed on a surface of

the absorbent body," that the coating material maintains "an effect of the bending elements," and

that the "surface of the coating material is not provided with the slit-like processing."

The Examiner asserts that "Buell teaches the flexure hinges 23A,B,C that are comprised of

slits as can be seen in Figs. 8, 9, 17 and 29." The flexure hinges in Buell are provided on the

deformation element. The deformation element is more rigid than the absorbent core and can be

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shaped by the flexure hinges. Thus, the absorbent core can be deformed by the deformation

element.

However, Buell fails to teach or suggest that the bending elements include a slit formed on

a surface of the absorbent body of the present invention, as recited in amended claim 1. This

removes an element from the present invention. The slits of the present invention enable the

absorbent body to easily change in form and to simultaneously reduce the flexural rigidity to bend

into a U-shape or S-shape. In addition, the slits reduce the flexural rigidity of the interlabial pad in

directions and on surfaces other than those discussed above.

Therefore, the present invention recited in amended claim 1 is patentably distinguishable

over Buell. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of the rejection of claim 1

and claims dependent therefrom.

Claim 2 is amended to incorporate features substantially similar to those recited in

previously presented claim 3.

Claim 3 is amended to recite the features that each slit has a length of 3 to 30 mm and a

breadth of 5 mm or less and that a distance between each parallel adjacent slit is 3 to 20 mm.

Support for such features is found in, for example, the Specification at page 20, line 26 to page 21,

line 1. The features of amended claim 3 is further patentably distinguishable over Buell in the

context of amended claim 1 from which claim 3 depends.

Independent claim 17 and claim 18 dependent therefrom are patentably distinguishable over

Buell to the extent that claim 17 includes features similar to those of amended claim 1 as discussed

above.

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CONCLUSION

In view of the above amendments, Applicants believe the pending application is in condition

for allowance. Accordingly, the Examiner is respectfully requested to pass this application to issue.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number

indicated below once he has reviewed the proposed amendment if the Examiner believes any issue

can be resolved through either a Supplemental Response or an Examiner's Amendment.

Respectfully submitted, Dated: November 9, 2006

Hirovuki Yasuda

Registration No.: 55,751

DARBY & DARBY P.C.

P.O. Box 5257

New York, New York 10150-5257

(212) 527-7700

(212) 527-7701 (Fax)

Attorneys/Agents For Applicant